



#### SYNOPSIS.

The story is told by Nicholas Trist. His chief, Senator John Calhoun, offered the portfolio of secretary of state in Tyler's cabinet, is told by Dr. Ward that his time is short. Calhoun declares that he is not ready to die, and if he accepts Tyler's offer it means that Texas and Oregon must be added to the Union. He plans to learn the intentions of England with regard to Mexico through Baroness von Ritz, secret spy and reputed mistress of the English ambassador, Pakenham. Nicholas is sent to bring the baroness to Calhoun's apartments and misuses a meeting with his sweetheart, Elizabeth Churchill. While searching for the baroness' house a carriage dashes up and Nicholas is invited to enter. The occupant is the baroness, who says she is being pursued. The pursuers are shaken off. Nicholas is invited into the house and delivers Calhoun's message. He notes that the baroness has lost a slipper. Nicholas is given the remaining slipper as a pledge that she will tell Calhoun everything. He gives her as security an Indian trinket he intended for Elizabeth. Elizabeth's father consents to Nicholas' proposal for her hand. Nicholas is ordered to leave at once for Montreal on state business and decides to be married that night.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

##### Mr. Calhoun Accepts.

A woman's tongue is her sword, that she never lets rust.—Madam Neckor.

I struggled among three courses. The impulses of my heart, joined to some prescience of trouble, bade me to follow Elizabeth. My duty ordered me to hasten to Mr. Calhoun. My interest demanded that I should tarry, for I was sure that the Baroness von Ritz would make no merely idle request in these circumstances. Hesitating thus, I lost sight of her in the throng. So I concluded I would obey the mandate of duty, and turned toward the great doors. Indeed, I was well toward the steps which led out into the grounds, when all at once two elements of my problem resolved themselves into one. I saw the tall figure of Mr. Calhoun himself coming up the walk toward me.

"Ah," said he briefly, "then my message found you?"

"I was starting for you this moment, sir," I replied.

"Wait for a moment. I counted on finding you here. Matters have changed."

I turned with him and we entered again the east room, where Mr. Tyler still prolonged the official greeting of the curious, the obsequious, or the banal persons who passed. Mr. Calhoun stood apart for a time, watching the progress of this purely American function. It was some time ere the groups thinned. This latter fact usually would have ended the reception, since it is not etiquette to suppose that the president can lack an audience; but to-day Mr. Tyler lingered. At last through the thinning throng he caught sight of the distinctive figure of Mr. Calhoun. For the first time his own face assumed a natural expression. He stopped the line for an instant, and with a raised hand beckoned to my chief.

At this we dropped in at the tail of the line. Mr. Calhoun in passing grasping almost as many hands as Mr. Tyler. When at length we reached the president's position, the latter greeted him and added a whispered word. An instant later he turned abruptly, ending the reception with a deep bow, and retired into the room from which he had earlier emerged.

Mr. Calhoun turned now to me with a request to follow him, and we passed through the door where the president had vanished. Directed by attendants, we were presently ushered into yet another room, which at that time served the president as his cabinet room, a place for meeting persons of distinction who called upon business.

As we entered I saw that it was already occupied. Mr. Tyler was grasping the hand of a portly personage, whom I knew to be none other than Mr. Pakenham. So much might have been expected. What was not to have been expected was the presence of another—none less than the Baroness von Ritz!

So we were apparently to understand that my lady was here as open friend of England! Of course, I needed no word from Mr. Calhoun to remind me that we must seem ignorant of this lady, of her character, and of her reputed relations with the British foreign office.

"I pray you be seated, Mr. Pakenham," said Mr. Tyler, and he gestured also to us others to take chairs near his table. Mr. Pakenham, in rather a lofty fashion, it seemed to me, obeyed the polite request, but scarcely had seated himself ere he again rose with an important clearing of his throat.

"Your excellency," said he, "her majesty the queen of England's wish is somewhat anticipated by my visit here to-day. I hasten only to put in the most prompt and friendly form her majesty's desires, which I am sure formally will be expressed in the first mails from England. We deplore this most unhappy accident on your warship Princeton, which has come so near working irreparable injury to this country."

"Sir," said Mr. Tyler, rising, with a deep bow, "the courtesy of your personal presence is most gratifying. Allow me to express that more intimate and warmer feeling of friendship for yourself which comes through our long

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## TIMELY SUGGESTIONS THAT WILL HELP THE HOSTESS

**Auction Sale of Paintings.**  
This affair may be arranged for a church society entertainment or used at a private party. Prepare an attractive catalogue of the "paintings," then announce that they will be sold at auction. Tie all the articles up in tissue paper so they will look attractive; some may be put in boxes. Much of the success depends upon the man chosen to act as auctioneer. Seals or toy coins may be used as money, or the bids may be made verbally, the auctioneer having an assistant to keep tab of the bids and see that all the parcels or paintings are delivered. Below I give a list of the pictures:

1. Horse Fair—Hay and oats.
2. The Tutor—A whistle.
3. A Bunch of Dates—Calendar.
4. A Souvenir of Greece—Vaseline box.
5. The Fortune Teller—A daisy.
6. Rank and File—Onion and nail file.
7. The Lost Chord—Piece of string.
8. The Old Man's Comfort—Pipe.
9. Black Beauty—A black doll.
10. The Tie that Binds—Necktie.
11. Bridal Scene—Halter and bride.
12. The Beginning of Love—Letter L.
13. A Celebrated Author of our Nation—Song—Key.
14. The Beau and Belle—Bell tied with a bow of ribbon.
15. Ruins in China—Broken dishes.
16. A Head—Postage stamp.
17. The Spinner—A toy spider.
18. A Perfect Foot (Trilby)—Foot rule.
19. Pillars of Greece—Two candles.
20. Flower of the Family—A tiny bag of flour.
21. A Drive Through the Wood—A nail driven in a piece of wood.
22. View of Castle—Soap.
23. Spring. Beautiful Spring—Sofa spring.
24. Way-worn Travelers—Old shoes.
25. The Lamplighter—A match.
26. The Midnight Hour—The number 12.
27. Old Dog Tray—Bologna.
28. Maid of Orleans—Molasses candy.
29. Before the Deluge—A Noah's Ark.

#### Unique Ways to Give Gifts.

In a family where there were no children and none to be borrowed from near relatives they devised this method of distributing the gifts: The day before Christmas a barrel covered with creep paper was placed in the reception hall. It was tied around with red ribbon and greens, and each member of the family placed parcels within. At breakfast it was rolled into the dining room and the contents disclosed by the one whose lot it was to perform the pleasant task. This honor was determined by two candy canes, one long, one short; the man who drew the long one officiated as Santa Claus. This is not much trouble, and infinitely better than just the ordinary giving things.

## Modes for Winter Wear



**Dress for Girl of 16 to 18 Years.**  
For winter wear there is nothing brighter and more cheering than a red dress; it is becoming to most young girls, especially if a rich shade is selected. The dress we show here is of quite simple design; the skirt is faced up on the right side with a piece about six inches deep; the bodice and sleeves are cut together; the yoke, waistband and cuffs are of silk braided; braid outlines the opening, and three buttons on each side add further to the trimming. Materials required: 5 yards 46 inches wide ¾ yard silk 22 inches wide.

**Afternoon Dress.**—This effective dress is carried out in light brown satin-faced cashmere and Paisley silk, in which the brown is introduced; a panel is taken from below yoke to foot, where it is continued round in a band; this is edged with silk of a dark shade, and has buttons covered in the same sewn in the corners of skirt and part way down front of panel; revers of the silk turn back from a yoke of

lace; the cuffs are also of the lace edged with silk. The Paisley forms the sides and back of skirt gathered in at waist, also to the band; for the sides and back of bodice the Paisley is finely tucked, the tucks being only stitched to bust in front. Materials required: 2 yards satin 44 inches wide 6½ yards Paisley silk 22 inches wide ¾ yard lace, 1½ yard black silk.

**Tweed Costume.**—Purple tweed is used for the costume we illustrate here. It has a narrow skirt made with a panel front and back, and has a band of plain cloth at foot; if liked this might be in leather, which certainly would be very smart. The coat is Russian in style, and has long revers of satin or leather; these are taken to the waist, where a narrow band of material connects the bodice with the upper part; three buttons form trimming on bodice; a leather belt encircles the waist. Hat of felt trimmed with satin ribbon. Materials required: 6 yards tweed 48 inches wide, ¾ yard satin, 3 buttons, 4 yards silk for lining coat.

association with you. This respect and admiration are felt by myself and my official family for you and the great power which you represent."

Each having thus delivered himself of words which meant nothing, both now seated themselves and proceeded to look mightily grave. For myself, I stole a glance from the tail of my eye toward the Baroness von Ritz. She sat erect in her chair, a figure of easy grace and dignity, but on her face was nothing one could read to tell who she was or why she was here.

"I seize upon this opportunity, Mr. Pakenham," said Mr. Tyler presently, with a smile which he meant to set all at ease and to soften as much as possible the severity of that which was to follow, "I gladly take this opportunity to mention in an informal way my hope that this matter which was already inaugurated by Mr. Upshur before his untimely death may come to perfectly pleasant consummation. I refer to the question of Texas."

"I beg pardon, your excellency," rejoined Mr. Pakenham, half rising. "Your meaning is not perfectly clear to me."

The same icy smile sat upon Mr. Tyler's face as he went on: "I cannot believe that your government can wish to interfere in matters upon this continent to the extent of taking the position of open ally of the Republic of Mexico, a power so recently at war upon our own borders, with the brave Texans who have left our flag to set up, through fair conquest, a republic of their own."

The mottled face of Mr. Pakenham assumed a yet deeper red. "As to that, your excellency," said he, "your remark is, as you say, quite informal, of course—that is to say, as I may state—"

"Quite so," rejoined Mr. Tyler gravely. "The note of my Lord Aberdeen to us, none the less, in the point of its bearing upon the question of slavery in Texas, appears to this government as an expression which ought to be disavowed by your own government. Do I make myself quite clear?" (With John Calhoun present, Mr. Tyler could at times assume a courage though he had it not.)

Mr. Pakenham's face glowed a deeper red. "I am not at liberty to discuss my Lord Aberdeen's wishes in this matter," he said. "We met here upon a purely informal matter, and—"

"I have only ventured to hope," rejoined Mr. Tyler, "that the personal kindness of your own heart might move you in so grave a matter as that which may lead to war between two powers."

"War, sir, war!" Mr. Pakenham went, wholly purple in his surprise, and sprang to his feet. "War!" he repeated once more. "As though there could be any hope—"

"Quite right, sir," said Mr. Tyler grimly. "As though there could be any hope for us save in our own conduct of our own affairs, without any interference from any foreign power!"

I knew it was John Calhoun speaking these words, not Mr. Tyler. I saw Mr. Calhoun's keen, cold eyes fixed closely upon the face of his president. The consternation created by the latter's words was plainly visible.

"Of course, this conversation is en-

tirely irregular—I mean to say, wholly unofficial, your excellency?" hesitated Pakenham. "It takes no part in our records?"

"Assuredly not," said Mr. Tyler. "I only hope the question may never come to a matter of record at all. Once our country knows that dictation has been attempted with us, even by England herself, the north will join the south in resentment. Even now, in restiveness at the fancied attitude of England toward Mexico, the west raises the demand that we shall end the joint occupancy of Oregon with Great Britain. Do you perchance know the watchword which is now on the popular tongue west of the Alleghenies? It bids fair to become an American 'Marsellaise'."

"I must confess my ignorance," rejoined Mr. Pakenham.

"Our backwoodsmen have invented a phrase which runs 'Fifty-Four Forty or Fight!'"

"I beg pardon, I am sure, your excellency?"

"It means that if we conclude to terminate the very unsatisfactory muddle along the Columbia river—a stream which our mariners first explored, as we contend—and if we conclude to dispute with England as well regarding our delimitations on the southwest, where she has even less right to speak, then we shall contend for all that territory, not only up to the Columbia, but north to the Russian line, the parallel of 54 degrees and 40 minutes! We claim that we once bought Texas clear to the Rio Grande, from Napoleon, although the foolish treaty with Spain in 1819 clouded our title—in the belief of our Whig friends, who do not desire more slave territory. Even the Whigs think that we own Oregon by virtue of first navigation of the Columbia. Both Whigs and Democrats now demand Oregon north to 54 degrees, 40 minutes. The alternative? My Lord Aberdeen surely makes no deliberate bid to hear it!"

"Oh fight!" exclaimed Pakenham. "God bless my soul! Fight us?"

Mr. Tyler flushed. "Such things have been," said he with dignity. At this astounding speech the British minister sat dumbfounded. This air of courage and confidence on the part of Mr. Tyler himself was something foreign to his record. I knew the reason for his boldness. John Calhoun sat at his right hand.

"At this point, your excellency, the dignity of her majesty's service would lead me to ask excuse," rejoined Mr. Pakenham formally, "were it not for one fact, which I should like to offer here. I have, in short, news which will appear full warrant for any communication thus far made by her majesty's government. I can assure you that there has come into the possession of this lady, whose able services I venture to enlist here in her presence, a communication from the Republic of Texas to the government of England. That communication is done by no less a hand than that of the attaché for the Republic of Texas, Mr. Van Zandt himself."

There was, I think, no other formal invitation for the Baroness von Ritz to speak; but now she arose, swept a curtsy first to Mr. Tyler and then to Mr. Pakenham and Mr. Calhoun.



"I Must Confess My Ignorance," Rejoined Mr. Pakenham.

"It is not to be expected, your excellency and gentlemen," said she, "that I can add anything of value here." Her eyes were demurely downcast.

"We do not doubt your familiarity with many of these late events," encouraged Mr. Tyler.

"True," she continued, "the note of my Lord Aberdeen is to-day the property of the streets, and of this I have some knowledge. I can see, also, difficulty in its reception among the courageous gentlemen of America. But, as to any written communication from Mr. Van Zandt, there must be some mistake!"

"I was of the impression that you would have had it last night," rejoined Pakenham, plainly confused; "in fact, that gentleman advised me to such effect."

The Baroness Helena von Ritz looked him full in the face and only gravely shook her head. "I regret matters should be so much at fault," said she.

"Then let me explain," resumed Pakenham, almost angrily. "I will state—unofficially, of course—that the promises of Mr. Van Zandt were that her majesty might expect an early end of the talk of the annexation of Texas to the United States. The greater power of England upon land or sea would assure that weak republic of a great and enlightened ally—in his belief."

"An ally!" broke out Mr. Calhoun. "And a document sent to that effect by the attaché of Texas!" He smiled coldly. "Two things seem very apparent, Mr. President. First, that this gentle lady stands high in the respect of England's ministry. Second, that Mr. Van Zandt, if all this were true, ought to stand very low in ours. I would say all this and much more, even were it a state utterance, to stand upon the records of this nation!"

"Sir," interrupted Mr. Tyler, swiftly turning to Mr. Calhoun, "may I not ask you that it be left as a state utterance?"

Mr. Calhoun bowed with the old-time grace habitual to him. "Mr. Calhoun," continued the president, "you know that the office of our secretary of state is vacant. There is no one living who would serve in that office more wisely than yourself, no one more in accordance with my own views as to these very questions which are before us. Since it has come to that point, I offer you now that office, and do so officially. I ask your answer."

The face of England's minister now for the first time went colorless. He knew what this meant.

As for John Calhoun, he played with both of them as a cat would with a mouse, sneeringly superior. His answer was couched in terms suited to his own purposes. "This dignity, Mr. President," said he, bowing deeply again, "so unexpected, so onerous, so responsible, is one which at least needs time for proper consideration. I must crave opportunity for reflection and for pondering. In my surprise at your sudden request, I find no proper answer ready."

Here, then, seemed an opportunity for delay, which Mr. Pakenham was swift to grasp. He arose and bowed to Mr. Tyler. "I am sure that Mr. Calhoun will require some days at least for the framing of his answer to an invitation so grave as this."

"I shall require at least some moments," said Mr. Calhoun, smiling. "That 'Marsellaise' of '44, Mr. President, says 'Fifty-Four Forty or Fight.' That means 'the Rio Grande or fight,' as well."

A short silence fell upon us all. Mr. Tyler half rose and half frowned as he noticed Mr. Pakenham shuffling as though he would depart.

"It shall be, of course, as you suggest," said the president to Pakenham. "There is no record of any of this. But the answer of Mr. Calhoun, which I await and now demand, is one which will go upon the records of this country soon enough, I fancy. I ask you, then, to hear what Calhoun replies."

"I have had some certain moments for reflection, Mr. President," said he, "and I have from the first moment of this surprising offer on your part been humbly sensible of the honor offered so old and so unfit a man."

"Sir, if I take this office which you offer, I do so with the avowed and expressed purpose of bringing Texas into this Union, in full view of any and all consequences. I shall offer her a treaty of annexation at once! I shall urge annexation at every hour, in every place, in all ways within my means, and in full view of the consequences!" He looked now gravely and keenly at the Englishman.

"That is well understood, Mr. Calhoun," began Mr. Tyler. "Your views are in full accord with my own."

"What, then, is the answer of John Calhoun to this latest call of his country?"

"That answer is one which is in our history. 'John Calhoun accepts!' said my master, loud and clear."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)